



Park Avenue United Methodist Church  
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Minneapolis, MN 55407  
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June 12, 2019

Dear Park Avenue Family,

Those of you able to be with us at our congregational meeting following worship on June 9<sup>th</sup> know that I made a difficult announcement. In just a few weeks it will be six years since I was appointed to Park to serve as your Senior Pastor, an experience that has changed my life forever. Coming from a different denominational and ministry context, I had much to learn (and still do!), and this amazing congregation has been willing to “learn” me and love me into a deeper place of understanding God and of pastoral ministry. For that I am profoundly grateful.

I have also been the recipient, for the past nearly two years, of your life-giving support as I have been in recovery from my diagnosis of Acute Myeloid Leukemia, an aggressive, life-threatening blood disease that has also profoundly changed me. God’s faithfulness and healing has allowed me to return to Park for the past year in a half-time capacity, since July of last Summer, an experience I wasn’t sure would be possible. Again, the prayers, support and love of the people of Park has sustained and humbled me (and my beloved wife Julie as well). I am so grateful that I’ve had this chance to return to the work I so love. What Julie and I have come to realize, though, through much prayer and discernment, is that my time at Park is drawing to a close. While my recovery has gone (and continues to go) well, I know that I do not have the energy or capacity to return to work full-time, and that the position of Senior Pastor at Park requires one’s full-time attention. So I have decided, after 40 years of serving as a local church pastor, to retire, effective December 31, 2019.

My gratitude for this season of ministry extends to our Bishop of the Minnesota Annual Conference, Bruce Ough, for entrusting me with this appointment. I have also been privileged to serve with such a capable and gifted staff, each of whom loves Jesus and loves our church. We are blessed! Elsewhere in this mailing you have received a statement from our Associate Pastor, Rev. Jia Starr Brown, regarding her sexual identity. I have so greatly appreciated Pastor Jia’s collegiality and many gifts to Park since her appointment and stand with her in her journey, supporting her continued ministry to our church.

I close with these words from the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Philippians, words that have encouraged me greatly over these many years:

*“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*      Philippians 4:4-7

With much fondness and affection in Christ,

Pastor Will Healy

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Healy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr. Will Healy, Senior Pastor  
Park Avenue United Methodist Church